No Place Like Home

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No Place Like Home

by TigerPrawn

Summary

Will has killed the Great Red Dragon as the wizard asked, but will the Wizard keep his promise?

Notes

My prompt fill for the Fannibal Fest fanthology

Will had been through too much for this to be the end.

"Wh-what do you mean, you can't send me home?" Will asked, anger causing his words to stutter.

He stood rigid in front of the imposing man who had already asked so much of him. Who had stood there with platitudes for his friends whilst Will waited for his reward, for everything he had done.

Will had no idea how many days had passed since he had come to Oz, only that they seemed like years. He and Winston had been whisked up in a tornado and deposited in this place that was equal parts enchanting and terrifying. He had made a treacherous journey along the Yellow Brick Road. Been given a mission by the Wizard, and now it should be at an end.

He'd made friends, helped them, been helped in return. He knew for the rest of his life he'd always remember fondly Jimmy, the scarecrow smarter than any he had known; Zeller the biggest-hearted tin man that ever was; and of course Jack - the bravest lion that could ever be. They had all proved themselves over and over whilst Will was sent to end the terror of the Great Red Dragon.

An assassination really.

Will wasn’t a simple country boy. He understood well enough what had been asked of him when the Wizard had requested Will return with the Dragon’s greatest treasure. A treasure he would die before giving up.

No, Will was not unaware of how this errand he'd been sent on was really murder. He'd set out on this quest a Louisiana boy who knew little outside the farmland he was raised on, but now he was a man. A man who had fought until he wore the blood of others as well as his own. A man who had sliced the stomach of the Great Red Dragon and watched his entrails bloody the floor. A man who had never felt more alive than in that moment.

A man who now stood before a Wizard.

A Wizard who would deny him what he had promised. What Will had righteously earned.

"I did as you asked. You said you would send me home." Will growled, lifting from the floor a roughly hewn sack to spill it's contents at the Wizard’s feet - a book precious to the Dragon that proved the truth of Will's words. Page after page fell out of the book compiled by the obsessive Dragon’s careful hands. Page after page of tales and sketches of the Wizard and his dark deeds. The treasure Will had been tasked to retrieve. "If you were really great and powerful, you'd keep your promises!"

When Will looked back up, a smile had quirked the corner of the Wizard's mouth. It was chilling for how beguiling it was.

"Dear boy, you cut me to the quick. There is a way to get you home but... Is that what you desire?" The words were a gentle croon that shivered through Will.

Will couldn't help his hesitation. Here he had done great things he could never have dreamed of. He had brought down an entire kingdom. He had done it all for this wizard, and his honey sweet words that tasted bitter now in Will’s mouth. He had done it and found...

"You've discovered a truth about yourself." The Wizard rumbled the words, low and honeyed once more.

"That doing bad things to bad people makes me feel good." Will answered without hesitation, knowing that was what he wanted to hear, but knowing equally it to be his utter truth.

Will frowned, puzzled. Had the Wizard done this to him? Had the Wizard made him a murderer and now wished to justify and excuse it as part of Will's nature?

Will thought back to a time before Oz. The dark thoughts towards his neighbour Francis Dolarhyde. The man who had threatened to kill Winston, and who had terrorised him as a child. The man who bore a remarkable likeness to the Great Red Dragon that now lay dead by Will’s hand. And in that moment Will knew the truth of who he was, and saw that truth reflected in the Wizard stood before him.

A man, no more than a man.

Will let out a shuddering breath, and voiced the decision his heart and mind had made the moment the Wizard had tasked him with the destruction of the Dragon in that vague recent past.

Will nodded. "I will stay." He heard the gasps of Jimmy, Zeller and Jack - their shock at his words was clear. And that reaction baffled him, they had been with him the whole time, had been his friends and yet they hadn't seen this of him? They couldn't see him the way that the Wizard could. The way the Wizard had when he had sent him on this journey, no doubt knowing the outcome.

The Wizard stepped forward and slipped a hand to the back of Will's neck, making him shudder at the unexpected intimacy of it.

"With all my knowledge and intrusion, I could never entirely predict you, Will. I can feed the caterpillar, whisper through the chrysalis, but what hatches follows its own nature and is beyond me."

Will shivered, every nerve within him tingling with a dark anticipation. And then the Wizard drew back, his hand trailing lightly across Will's jaw and to the tip of his chin, holding his gaze.

"Those shoes Beverly the Good Witch gave you, all you need do is click the heels together three times and you shall be home." The Wizard's tone was flat, disinterested - though Will knew that wasn't remotely true. He could see that of the Wizard now too, see his truth. "Or... you can harness their power into something even greater and rule here. By my side."

The Wizard's words were full of a darkness that Will knew had seduced him a long time before this day. Though not quite a seduction - Will had embraced it willingly.

"This is my home now." Will replied, a tremor of excited anticipation running through him at the glint his words brought to the Wizard's eyes. "You brought me home."

The Wizard's mouth curved into a predatory smile that drew Will to his side.

"I said I would get you home, Will. And I always keep my promises."

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